

Variational approach to the use of the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* in French

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Abstract: Inspired by Erling’s abiding interest in variational linguistics, our contribution aims at exploring two interesting, yet rather unexplored, cases of grammaticalization processes – i.e. the grammaticalization and subsequent actualization (Andersen 2001a, 2008) of the preposition *vu* (‘since’) and the conjunction *vu que* (‘given’) in French. Our paper is intended to investigate these items, which are found in French from the Middle French period, in order to consider whether they are introduced “from above” or “from below”. Most frequently, innovations start from below, i.e. in unmarked contexts.¹ In Modern French the preposition *vu* is mainly found in legal texts, whereas *vu que* seems to have spread from legal texts to other registers. This suggests a diachronic process starting from above. We intend to investigate this question by use of diverse corpora including administrative language, novels, historical texts, and web-language, focusing on the role of diachronic, diaphasic (text type), and diamesic variation parameters.

1. Introduction

The present paper aims at exploring two interesting, yet rather unexplored, cases of grammaticalization processes: the grammaticalizations and subsequent actualizations, i.e. spreading of the grammaticalized form through the language system and through text types, (Andersen 2001a, 2008) of the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* in French.²

We use the term grammaticalization according to Nørgård-Sørensen et al. (2011), implying a paradigmatic organization of the entities that undergo change – either a change by which a linguistic element enters a grammatical paradigm or a change within or among grammatical paradigms. In order to distinguish between these two types, we follow Andersen (2006: 232-233), who has introduced the more precise labels *grammation* and *regrammation*, respectively, to refer to individual instances of grammaticalization with the following definitions:

Grammation: a change by which an expression through reanalysis is ascribed grammatical content (change from any other, including zero, content to grammatical content).

Regrammation: a change by which a grammatical expression through reanalysis is ascribed different grammatical content (change within and among grammatical paradigm).

Both types of processes result from reanalysis, i.e. a new analysis of received usage due to opacity or structural ambiguity not necessarily with immediate surface manifestation of change. The speaker interprets the content of a given string first as A, then as B (grammation), and sometimes further reanalysis causes a new interpretation of B to C (regrammation).

Grammaticalization and the subsequent spreading of forms – i.e. actualization – leading, in the present case, from lexical verb forms to grammaticalized forms can, in principle, follow two pathways

¹ The concept of markedness is used in several senses and on many levels; here it concerns linguistic registers: an unmarked context is supposed to reflect a type of communication close to informal direct speech, as opposed to a marked context, which reflects formal speech and specific usage.

² “A grammaticalization is a macro-change comprising changes in content, in content syntax (semantax), in expression, and in expression syntax (morphosyntax). The central change in a grammaticalization is a content change, typically from lexical to grammatical content (grammation), or from grammatical to more grammatical content (regrammation)” (Andersen 2013: 123).

of actualization: either starting “from below”, i.e. from unmarked contexts such as direct speech, and subsequently spread through the language system and different text types, or starting “from above”, i.e. from marked contexts and specific usage (for example, language for specific purposes) and subsequently spread to less marked contexts. On the contrary, if started “from above”, they may be in the process of spreading to less marked text types. Our previous research on *vu* and *vu que* (see Kragh 2022) has shown that, in Modern French, the two forms are mainly found in administrative texts. In principle, *vu* and *vu que* may have started “from below” or “from above”. If started “from below”, they may have spread from unmarked to marked text types, and possibly fossilized. In the following, we will provide examples which illustrate the reanalysis from lexical to grammatical use (section 3). In order to find out which of the two hypotheses is correct, we will first refer to the preliminary results from Kragh (2022) in section 4. These results lead us to a further investigation of the grammaticalization and actualization processes of the two forms, by exploring four corpora – two old and two contemporary ones, both containing a literary and an administrative corpus (section 5) – in order to include variational dimensions. Our present results motivate us to discuss an important variational issue, i.e. the difficult question on the status of fictitious direct speech in older texts. As we suppose that *vu que* is a secondary grammaticalization (a regrammation), our investigation starts with the grammaticalization of *vu*. Our conclusions are found in section 6. Because the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* are originally coined from forms of the lexical verb *voir* (‘to see’), we will start with a short introduction about this verb (section 2).

2. The lexical verb *voir* (‘to see’)³

Voir is a member of a lexical paradigm of verbs of visual perception. The lexical field relating to vision and sight is significantly more extensive than that of the other senses. In French, visual perception is where we find the largest number not only of verbs (*apercevoir*, *discerner*, *percevoir*, *regarder*, *reluquer*, *entrevoir*, *voir*, etc.), but also of figurative expressions and of fossilized expressions. The long list of lexical verbs can be classified with respect to their overall meaning, according to which a verb such as *voir* has a general or prototypical meaning, in contrast to, for instance, *apercevoir* and *entrevoir*, which have a more nuanced meaning (i.e. they are peripheral verbs) (Grezka 2009: 8-12). Furthermore, the verbs of visual perception can be classified according to their degree of intentionality, as proposed by Krefeld (1998: 158). These different distinctions are relevant for the semantic definition of *voir* in terms of a lexical unit.

Voir has two basic meanings: 1) to perceive something through the sense of sight and 2) to comprehend, realize, find out. Willems (1983) distinguishes between a direct, physical perception in relation to the first meaning and an indirect, cognitive perception in relation to the second meaning. With respect to the direct perception, the perception and the perceived action are simultaneous, whereas simultaneity is not a criterion for the indirect perception. These meanings are relevant in order to distinguish lexical from grammaticalized use of the verb forms.

3. The reanalysis from lexical to grammatical use

3.1. The preposition *vu*

The form *vu* is originally the past participle (hence PP) of the verb *voir* ‘to see’. It is used as a predicate in absolute constructions. An absolute construction is a nexus structure with a relation of solidarity between the NP and the predicative element: NP [*étant*] *vu*:

- (1) *Si retorna isnelement contre celi et l’a tantost occis, ja ce fust que les Albains criassent aus Curaces que il aidassent a leur frere. Ceste chose veue, les Romains se prenent a crier paou-reusement et a conforter leur chevalier ...* ‘So [he] returned quickly towards him and killed

³ This section is from Kragh (2022), section 3.1.

him straight away, but the Albans shouted to Curaces that they should help their brother. This thing **seen**, the Romans begin to cry of fear and to comfort their knight...’ (Bersuire Pierre, *Les Décades de Titus Livius*, 1354, Frantext⁴)

It is our hypothesis that the preposition *vu* is a reanalysis of an absolute construction with the PP in anteposition.

Already in Old French, anteposition of the PP occurred in absolute constructions, as illustrated by Aspland (1968). Medieval legal documents were often introduced by a standard formular with two possible word orders, NP + *vu* or *vu* + NP, depending on different dialects (Dees 1980: 298). However, the order PP+NP was standard according to Cauchie (see Cauchie 2001 [1586]: 495). Concord between PP and NP, with both word orders, was unstable in Medieval French; whereas in Modern French, postposed PP (NP + PP) should show concord.⁵ It should be noted, however, that concord in the case of *vu* is graphic, not pronounced.⁶ In example (1), the PP concurs with the NP *Ceste chose*. The earliest example of *vu* (originally spelled *veu*) + NP found in Frantext⁷ is from 1160:

- (2) *En l’ost n’orent pas lor seignor ; en l’endemain, veü le jor, li conte et li duc s’asamblèrent, et communement esgarderent qu’a Eneas envoieroient, et XV. jors trieuvez querroient⁸ por faire lor mors enterer et les nauvrez medeciner.* ‘They did not have their commander in the army; the following day, by **daybreak**, the counts and dukes assembled, and they decided together that they would send word to Eneas and they would ask for 15 days of ceasefire to bury their dead and nurse their wounded soldiers’ (Anonymous, *Le roman d’Eneas*, 1160, Frantext)

Veü le jour is an absolute construction, corresponding to *le jour* (meaning daylight) *étant vu*, i.e. a nexus construction, corresponding to the term ‘daybreak’. Here, the lexical meaning of *voir* is probably the originally visual perception. The increased use of absolute constructions, especially in legal or administrative texts in which the NPs are more abstract (cf. Dees 1980), illustrates, however, a more cognitive interpretation of *voir*. In the following example, two interpretations of the PP are possible: a cognitive interpretation of the verb or a bleached, grammatical interpretation:

- (3) *Tous lesquieulx dirent que ledit prisonnier estoit larron, veue sa confession, et furent d’opinion, sauf ledit Fouquere, qu’il feust pendu comme tel, et que l’en ne l’en pouvoit espargnier* ‘All these said that the aforementioned prisoner was a thief, his confession having **been seen/given** his confession, and were of the opinion, except for the aforementioned Fouquere, that he should be hanged accordingly, and that he could not be spared’ (Anonymous, *Registre criminel du Châtelet*, 1389, Frantext)

We believe that a clear case of reanalysis is found below, in example (4). Here, the NP *la force du roy* is abstract in the sense that it is not physically perceptible, thus *veü* has either a cognitive or a bleached meaning:

⁴ Originally written by the Roman historian Titus Livius (d. 17 AD), translated by Pierre Bersuire in 1354.

⁵ *Vu* shares certain features with forms such as *attendu*, *excepté*, *compris*, *hormis*; however, *vu* and *attendu* are the only forms which are always anteposed in Modern French (Grevisse & Goosse 2008: 293).

⁶ In some medieval dialects, the final *-e* was pronounced, either as [ə] or in the form of a lengthening of the stressed vowel.

⁷ Digital text corpus: <https://www.frantext.fr>.

⁸ In Frantext, it is written *guerroient*, which does not make sense. We believe that it is an error for *querroient*. The BMF has a slightly different version, with the verb *prendroient*, which makes sense, just as *querroient*.

- (4) *Je feïz plusieurs assemblées, tant de nobles que de gens d'eglise et des villes, et, à leur requeste, ou de la pluspart, declairay que le roy vouloit que ledit seigneur Constantin demourast en son gouvernement, car, veü la force du roy delà les mons et l'affection que le pays porte à la maison de France, ilz n'y poyoient contredire au vouloir du roy* 'I organized several meetings, both with noble men, clergymen, and citizens, and on their request or on the request of the major part of them, I declared that the king wanted that the afore mentioned ruler Constantin preserved his government, because, **considering** the power of the king beyond the mountains and the affection of the country towards the royal house of France, they could not go against the king's will' (Commynes, *Mémoires*, 1495, Frantext)

According to a possible lexical interpretation, *veü* means 'having been realized' and is a verbal predicate expressing cognition in an absolute construction. However, another interpretation is also possible, or even better, in which *veü* + NP expresses a factual condition 'given the power of the king...', which functions as an explanation of the situation described by the verb in the following proposition, i.e. it has a relation of causality. Thus, example (4) provides a clear example of bridging or critical context which permits reanalysis because of the ambiguity in structure (cf. Diewald 2002; Heine 2002). This interpretation could be confirmed by non-concord between the feminine word for power (*force*) and the PP.⁹ The grammaticalized interpretation of (4) is the result of the speaker reanalysing the PP form of *voir*, followed by an NP, in the following way: A (PP of the verb *voir* in its cognitive meaning, followed by an NP, constituting an absolute construction in which the perfective aspect indicates that the goal of the construction is to express that the realization has taken place) > B (a prepositional phrase (PrPH), which is a new way of expressing a causal relation between the content of the PrPH and the main clause). This implies that the construction has acquired not only a) a different function, no longer being a verb + subject, but it is also reanalysed as a preposition + complement with b) a different meaning, i.e. that of referring to a fact.

During the process of reanalysis of the PP form of *voir* as the predicate of an absolute construction (A), the verb loses its lexical cognitive meaning. Subsequently, it grammaticalizes as a preposition (B) and tends to invariability, which is a sign of change of part of speech. To illustrate the reanalysis, let us consider example (5). Here, the NP *esprit* 'mind' is so abstract that it is not possible to imagine any remnants of the original lexical content, neither physical nor cognitive, of the verb *voir*. Furthermore, it is not possible to insert an element between *Vu* and *ton esprit*:

- (5) *Vu ton esprit, qui les autres surpasse, Je m'ébahis comment je prends audace Composer vers* '**Considering**¹⁰ your mind, which surpasses the others, I am amazed how I dare to compose verse' (Marot, *L'Adolescence clementine*, 1538, Frantext)

We therefore propose that the reanalysis of the absolute construction consists of a reinterpretation of the relation between the PP and the NP of an absolute construction (stage A1), i.e. a complex, separable NP consisting of a perceptible NP + PP, possibly with concordance (see example (1) → (stage A2) PP with ±concordance + ± perceptible NP; see examples (3) and (4) → (stage B) PrPH (preposition + ± perceptible NP), see example (5)). In other words, the reanalysis consists of the change from an absolute construction consisting of a PP ± concordancing with its subject, the latter ± perceptible NPs, possibly separated by the participle by other elements into an inseparable PrPH, with a preposition followed by any type of NPs. Accordingly, *vu* becomes a member of the paradigm of prepositions.

⁹ We recall that concord was never obligatory in the old language.

¹⁰ We adapt the English translations of *vu/vu que* to the contexts, choosing different synonyms. Please note that the choice of different synonyms does not imply that there are differences in meaning between the different choices.

3.2. The conjunction *vu que*

Let us now turn to the conjunction *vu que*. We propose to analyse the appearance of the complement clause as an extension of complementation possibilities of the preposition *vu*. In other words, the chain of reanalysis proposed above is supplemented by a reanalysis of the grammaticalized use of *vu* as preposition + complement to also allow for a complement clause to be governed by the preposition, thus turning *vu + que* into a conjunction. According to Robert et al. (2007), *vu* has functioned as a preposition since the fourteenth century. As regards the conjunction *vu que*, Robert et al. (2007) date the first use back to 1421, i.e. half a century later. If this chronology is correct, it suggests, but does not prove, that the latter is derived from the former. This hypothesis will be tested in the course of our corpus investigation (section 5). However, a recent study (Kragh 2022, chapter 8) on the actualization and relative chronology of the two forms, based on Frantext, suggests, firstly, that the peak of the use of the preposition *vu* is found in the medieval period (1300-1549), and that the conjunction *vu que* is found earlier than observed by Robert et al. This could indicate that the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* are developed almost at the same time. We find it logical, even if the order cannot be proved, to start from the absolute construction with *vu* as the PP (with the cognitive meaning) and an NP (in the function of subject) which forms a nexus with the verbal predicate. The absolute construction is subsequently reanalysed as a preposition with an NP as its complement, as illustrated above. Once grammaticalized as a preposition, *vu*'s potential for nominal complements is expanded to also include a complement clause, as illustrated in example (6). The complements are marked by the underscore:

- (6) ***Vu** le changement de la situation actuelle, il a dû partir* → ***Vu que** la situation actuelle a changé, il a dû partir* ‘**Given** the change in the current situation, he has had to leave’ → **Since** the current situation has changed, he has had to leave’

Subsequently, *vu + complement clause* introduced by *que* has been reanalysed as the conjunction *vu que* introducing a causal clause; in other words, *vu que* has joined the paradigm of subordinate conjunctions:

- (7) ***Vu que** la situation actuelle a changé, il a dû partir* → ***Vu que** la situation actuelle a changé, il a dû partir*

This process, a new analysis of the same surface structure, is what Haspelmath (1998) labels *rebracketing*. Since the preposition + complement is already part of grammar, this last process is a regrammation $B > C$ (Andersen 2006), a more systematic term corresponding to the loosely formulated analyses by Heine & Kuteva (2002: 4): “items already part of the inventory of grammatical forms give rise to more strongly grammaticalized items. Prepositions often develop into conjunctions.” It is, however, difficult to estimate the exact moment of this change since there is no surface manifestation of change.

4. Preliminary results presented in Kragh (2022)

As indicated above, the majority of occurrences of the absolute constructions from the Middle Ages corpus are found in legal or administrative texts. This suggests, we believe, that the use of *vu + NP* emerges first in formal contexts, possibly as imitations of Latin charters. From there on, it spreads to more informal contexts. Quantitative analyses of the data from Frantext (non-filtered corpus¹¹)

¹¹ Non-filtered with respect to genres.

suggest that the frequency of the absolute construction with *vu* + NP was rather high in Middle French (2.5 occurrences per 100,000 words) as compared to the following periods (see Table 1 below). This, most likely, has to do with the fact that the Middle French corpus has a high proportion of charters and treaties in which the absolute construction *veu* + NP (*lettres, procès, confession, opinion*, etc.) is present. This indicates that the grammation of *vu* is externally motivated, starting in the formal registers, later spreading to more informal registers. It is difficult to determine a precise period for the reanalysis and grammaticalization, but given that the first unambiguous occurrences of *vu* as a preposition appearing in the Frantext data of Kragh (2022) are from around 1500, this is probably the time around which the process has taken place. Once grammaticalized as a preposition, the frequency of *vu* + NP varies in the early periods, but the overall frequency regardless of position seems to be stable from the classical period onwards.

Like the preposition *vu*, *vu que* seems to peak in the medieval and pre-classical periods (2.4 and 5.2 occurrences per 100,000 words, respectively), after which the frequency is stable and on a very low scale. Here again, we assume that this peak, which is parallel to the peak of the preposition, is due to an extensive use in legal and administrative texts. This is entirely in line with the results of Bolly & Degand (2012, 2013), who conclude that there has not been much change in the use of *vu que*, and that this conjunction is characterized by semantic, formal, and functional stability over the centuries. They state, furthermore, that *vu que* is conventionalized in the classical period (seventeenth to eighteenth centuries), supposedly due to the high rate of treaties and conventions published during this time (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of prepositional phrase *vu* + complement and of clausal conjunctions introduced by *vu que*. Actual numbers in brackets. Unfiltered corpus.

	<i>Vu</i> (preposition)	<i>Vu que</i> (conjunction)
Medieval period (1300-1549)		
Corpus size: 10,089,848 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	1.2 ¹²	2.4 ¹³
	(123)	(238)
Pre-classical period (1550-1649)		
Corpus size: 14,827,767/14,827,773 ¹⁴ words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	1.2	5.2
	(174)	(765)
Classical period (1650-1799)		
Corpus size: 43,514,407/43,635,170 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0.4	0.3
	(185)	(142)

¹² Quantitative results from this period are based on the same search-string as the other periods, which for the sake of comparability are either full-stop or comma, followed by an article ([. *Vu le/la/les* + N] or [, *vu le/la/les* + N]). However, as is clear from Kragh (2022, section 8.1.2), the findings from the medieval period are not all occurrences of the grammaticalized form but may be predicates in absolute constructions.

¹³ Quantitative results from this period are based on the same search-string as the other periods, which for the sake of comparability are either full-stop or comma, followed by the participle *vu* + *que* functioning as conjunction ([. *Vu que*] or [, *vu que*]). However, as is clear from Kragh (2022, section 8.2.2), the findings from the medieval period are not all occurrences of the grammaticalized conjunction but may be instances of the preposition *vu* + complement clause.

¹⁴ Since the corpus Frantext is dynamic, the number of words may vary slightly from one query to another. The numbers after the slash refer to the query on *vu que*.

Modern period (1800-1979)		
Corpus size: 149,693,978/149,764,941 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0.4 (558)	0.2 (341)
Contemporary period (1980-2020) Corpus		
size: 39,734,180/41,729,482 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0.6 (239)	0.3 (134)

The results from Kragh (2022) and Bolly & Degand (2012, 2013) motivate us to explore further the hypothesis that the (re)grammaticalization of *vu* (*que*) has originated in legal documents, thus spreading “from above”.

5. Corpus investigations

Our investigation starts in the centuries of the first appearances of *vu/vu que*, until the eighteenth century. Firstly, following the advice of Pierre Larrivé, we will investigate a few literary texts, partly compiled by Pierre Larrivé, partly from Frantext (section 5.1). Subsequently, thanks to the help of Pierre Larrivé and Mathieu Goux, we have been able to explore a large number of legal texts from Normandy, which form a comparable, however longer, period (section 5.2).¹⁵ Secondly, we jump to Contemporary French; first, literary texts from 2020 till 2022 (section 5.3) and then administrative texts from 2016, compared with a corpus of non-filtred web-texts from 2017 (section 5.4), in order to test our hypothesis concerning diaphasic distribution (situational, stylistic variation) between the use of *vu/vu que* in the two text types. According to the distribution of markedness (Andersen 2001b) and the results found in our preliminary corpus investigations from Kragh (2022) (see section 4), we expect to find more examples of *vu/vu que* in texts representing communication of distance and fewer examples in text types representing communication of proximity. Our discussion of the results is found in section 5.5.

5.1. Old literary corpus

In section 3, we have quoted the first observed grammaticalized examples of *vu* + NP and *vu que*, dating from around 1400, in the present corpus. In order to explore more precisely the process of grammaticalization, we have focused further on literary texts originating from the period 1220 to 1577. We have chosen one text from each of the four centuries: three texts from the Frantext corpus: *La Queste del Saint Graal* (anonymous author, 1220), *Bérenus I + II* (anonymous author, 1350), *Le Jouvencel I + II* (Jean V. de Bueil, 1461). Additionally, we have consulted the first hundred pages of *La Plaisante et amoureuse histoire du Chevalier Doré et de la pucelle surnommée Coeur d’acier* (published by Benoist Rigaud in 1577).

We have included *Queste* and *Bérenus* in order to verify our datation from the previous studies, suggesting that no grammaticalized examples of *vu/vu que* have been detected before around 1400. We have found rather few examples in our literary corpus (see Table 2). The occurrences per 100,000 words in *Chevalier Doré* is rather high, but the corpus is relatively small and does not permit us to conclude that either *vu* or *vu que* were frequently used after 1400, although we find it remarkable that

¹⁵ We sincerely thank Pierre Larrivé and Mathieu Goux for many good pieces of advice and for sharing their corpora and their results with us. We are especially grateful that they have given us access to their lemmatised databases (*Condé et Micle*, see <https://txm-crisco.huma-num.fr/txm/>) and even provided us with concordances that we were unable to produce ourselves. Moreover, we have received an electronic version of the novel *Le Chevalier Doré*, from 1577, transcribed by Pierre Larrivé.

the frequency of *vu que* (49.6 occurrences per 100,000 words) by far exceeds that of *vu* (11.4 occurrences per 100,000 words).

Table 2. Frequency of prepositional phrase *vu* + complement and of clausal conjunctions introduced by *vu que*. Actual numbers in brackets. Old literary texts.

	<i>Vu</i> (preposition)	<i>Vu que</i> (conjunction)
Queste 1220		
Corpus size: 108,768 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0 (0)	0 (0)
Bérinus 1350		
Corpus size: 148,347 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0 (0)	0 (0)
Jouvencel 1461		
Corpus size: 122,402 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	3.3 (4)	4.1 (5)
Chevalier Doré 1577		
Corpus size: 149,693,978/149,764,941 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	11.4 (3)	49.6 (13)
Total		
Corpus size: 405,748 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	1.7 (7)	4.4 (18)

Interestingly, we find examples of *vu* preposition in fictitious direct speech in both texts ((8), (9), (10), and (11)) – in total six out of seven occurrences. As for *vu que*, we have found direct speech only in *Chevalier Doré* (example (14)) – in total six out of thirteen. This indicates that the use, mainly of *vu* but also of *vu que*, has spread to informal contexts. As for concord between *vu* and complement, we find no concord in any of the combinations where concord would be graphically detectable ((8), (9), and (11)), suggesting a full grammaticalization of the preposition.

Vu:

- (8) *Monseigneur, je vous suppli, mercyez le Roy pour moy; car ma bouche n'est pas digne de le remercier, veu les grans biens, la grant bonté que je trouve en lui.* ‘My lord, I beg you, thank the king on my behalf, since my mouth is not worthy to thank him, **because of** the high quality and the goodness that I find in him’ (direct speech) (Bueil, *Le Jouvencel*, T.2, 1461, Frantext)

- (9) *C'est assés pour gagner la muraille et pour ouvrir la porte, **veu** les gens qui sont ou chastel.* 'It is sufficient to reach the walls and open the gates, **considering** the people who are in the castle' (direct speech) (Bueil, *Le Jouvencel*, T.1, 1461, Frantext)
- (10) *Noble pucelle, (direct speech) dit le Cheualier, i'appercoy assez que les Dieux ne me furent pas du tout contraires, quand, **veu** le peril où i'ay esté, ils consentirent que ie tombasse entre vos mains (direct speech) ...* 'Noble lady, said the knight, I realize easily that the Gods were not against me, when they accepted me to fall into your hands, **considering** the danger in which I have been.' (*Le Chevalier Doré*, 1577)
- (11) *... : car le Roy n'a en tout son hostel que quatre Cheualiers qui puissent porter armes, & c'est trop peu **veu** la puissance de ses ennemis.* '... because the king has in his palace only four knights capable to defend him, and that is not enough **considering** the force of his enemies' (direct speech) (*Le Chevalier Doré*, 1577)

Vu que:

- (12) *Et n'est pas de merveille se le dit Jouvencel est parvenu à icel lui hault estat de politique, **veu qu'**il a eu si bon commencement et si bon moyen,* 'It is no wonder that the said Jouvencel has reached this high political status, **because** he has started so well and with good means' (Bueil, *Le Jouvencel*, T.2, 1461, Frantext)
- (13) *... et lui escripvit une lettre comment il florissoit en armes et que Dieu lui avoit donné tant de victories et tant d'honneur sur lui qu'il devoit souffire sans vouldoir poursuivre plus avant à sa destruction, qui lui seroit repute cruaulté, **veu qu'**il n'avoit plus de puissance ...* 'and he¹ wrote him² a letter about how he² had excelled in the use of weapons, and that God had given him² so many victories over him¹ and so much honour, that he² should accept, without pushing forward his¹ destruction, which would be a cruel thing to do, **because** he¹ had not any force left ...' (Bueil, *Le Jouvencel*, T.2, 1461, Frantext)
- (14) *... & ie vous promets qu'il le merite bie(n), **veu que** pour l'amour de la pucelle il entreprint à querir le Geant aux crins dorez, do(n)t vo(u)s m'avez premiereme(n)t parlé ...* 'and I promise you that he deserves it, **because** – for the love of the young lady – he decided to look for the giant with the golden hair that you have told me about' (direct speech) (*Le Chevalier Doré*, 1577)
- (15) *Quand le Cheualier ouyt le cry de la damoiselle si pres de luy, il fut moult esbahi, **veu qu'**il estoit prins en sursaut entre son dormir & veiller.* 'When the knight heard the cry of the young lady so close to him, he was deeply astonished, **because** he was suddenly caught between sleep and awareness' (*Le Chevalier Doré*, 1577)

Analyses of the old literary corpus indicate that the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* emerge at the same time (first attested in *Jouvencel* 1461), and with almost equal frequency: 3.3 and 4.1 occurrences per 100,000 words, respectively. However, the examples found in *Le Chevalier Doré* are exceptionally numerous and might have individual causes. During the following century, as shown in Kragh (2022), they both increase in frequency, but the use of *vu que* by far exceeds that of *vu*. We have found examples in fictitious speech, suggesting the actualization of use of both forms in less-

formal text types.

5.2. Old administrative corpus

Our administrative texts all stem from the TXM-CRISCO database. The corpora used here are composed of two collections: the first, labelled *ConDÉ* (<https://pdl-lingua.unicaen.fr/coutumiers/conde/bibliographie.html>), contains transcriptions of administrative texts from Normandy from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century (<https://txm-crisco.huma-num.fr/txm/>). We have consulted texts from around 1300 up till 1771 and found occurrences of *vu* and/or *vu que* in nine different texts (see Table 3). The second corpus, labelled *Micle*, contains 12 administrative texts of Norman or Anglo-Norman origin from 1207 till 1643 (<https://txm-crisco.huma-num.fr/txm/?locale=fr>). From both corpora we have included only the texts where we have found at least one occurrence of *vu* and/or *vu que*.

In our presentation we have merged the two corpora, although we are informed that they represent texts which are different with respect to the communication axis of distance-proximity. Indeed, the *Coutumier* of ConDÉ are close to the distance pole and their learned style full of abstractions and generalisations. In contrast, according to Mathieu Goux, *Les Styles et Instructions* and *Les procès/minutes* are closer to the proximity pole of communication than the other texts, being didactic instructions for future lawyers and, as such, include oral features. However, one could claim that the didactic use of dialogue, known as a pedagogical tool, already in Ancient Rome and during the Middle Ages, does not mirror genuine oral communication amongst “ordinary people”. We are aware that fictitious direct speech in literary texts cannot be taken to reflect “ordinary” authentic direct communication. Nevertheless, the training of future lawyers in oral communication to the public is intended to provide the speaker with authority, hence a language of distance. We will return to this point in section 5.5.

A few texts from the thirteenth century have been explored but there were no occurrences of *vu* (preposition) nor of *vu que*. Interestingly, the administrative corpus contains examples from as early as the fourteenth century, thus slightly antedating the occurrences in the literary corpus. Although the occurrences are infrequent in these small corpora, it seems that the preposition *vu* is more frequent than the conjunction *vu que* until around 1550 (see the numbers of Guillaume Terrien from 1578 in Table 3). We observe that there is a peak in frequency of *vu* in the *Style et Usage* from 1425, due to the specificity of this text, commented on above. The frequency of *vu que* outnumbering *vu* is particularly significant in the most recent texts from this corpus: Josias Bérault from 1614, Henri Basnage from 1678-1681, and Pesnelle from 1771.

Table 3. Frequency of prepositional phrase *vu* + complement and of clausal conjunctions introduced by *vu que*. Actual numbers in brackets. Old administrative texts.

The texts stemming from the *Micle* corpus are marked by an asterix (*).

	<i>Vu</i> (preposition)	<i>Vu que</i> (conjunction)
<i>Le Grand Coutumier de Normandie ca. 1300</i>		
Corpus size: 64,545 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0 (0)	1.5 (1)
<i>Instructions et enseignemens 1386-1390</i>		
Corpus size: 8,698 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	11.5 (1)	0 (0)

<i>Style et Usage 1425*</i>		
Corpus size: 67,092 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	20.9 (14)	1.5 (1)
<i>Procès Jeanne d'Arc 1431*</i>		
Corpus size: 37,449 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	2.7 (1)	0 (0)
<i>Roche-Guyon 1502*</i>		
Corpus size: 37,843 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0 (0)	2.6 (1)
<i>Guillaume le Rouillé 1539: Coutumier</i>		
Corpus size: 299,802 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0.7 (2)	0.3 (1)
<i>Guillaume Terrien 1578: Commentaires</i>		
Corpus size: 458,978 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	2.2 (10)	5.2 (24)
<i>La fille possédée 1591*</i>		
Corpus size: 27,887 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	3.6 (1)	0 (0)
<i>Josias Bérault 1614: Coutume</i>		
Corpus size: 609,168 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0.8 (5)	3.0 (18)
<i>Henri Basnage 1678-1681: Coutume</i>		
Corpus size: 1,305,255 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	1.2 (16)	4.1 (54)
<i>Pierre Biarnoy de Merville 1731: Décisions</i>		
Corpus size: 533,690 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0 (0)	0.2 (1)
<i>Pesnelle 1771: Coutume</i>		
Corpus size: 602,724 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	0.3 (2)	7 (41)
Total		
Corpus size: 4,053,131 words		

frequency pr. 100,000 words	1.3	3.5
	(52)	(143)

Occurrences of *vu* preposition in fictitious direct speech are found, e.g., in examples (16), (18), and (19). As for *vu que*, occurrences of direct speech are found in examples (20) and (23); as said above, we have in mind that this type of direct speech probably does not mirror authentic oral communication. As for concord between *vu* and complement, we find both concord in (16) and (18), and also non-concord, as in (17) and (19).

Vu:

- (16) ..., *et veue la coustume par moy alleguée et mes raisons, je me deffend de ...* ‘because of the rule that I have invoked and my reasons, I protest...’ (direct speech) (Anonymous, *Instructions et enseignemens: style de procéder d’une justice seigneuriale normande*, 1386-1390, ConDÉ)
- (17) *et demande restitution de l’héritage, veu la fraude apparente ...* ‘and claims the restitution of the heritage, because of the evident fraud’ (Terrien, *Commentaire du droit civil tant public que privé observé en Normandie*, 1578, ConDÉ)
- (18) *Et le dit Pol dit, veues mes lettres et le fait affirmé, je soustiens le contraire, ...* ‘And the aforementioned Pol says: given my letters and the affirmed fact, I claim the opposite’ (direct speech) (Echiquier, *Style et Usage*, 1425, Micle)
- (19) « *Il me semble, veu la maladye que j’ay, que je suis en grand peril de mort ...* ‘I believe, because of the illness that I have, that I am in great danger of death’ (direct speech) (*Procès Jeanne d’Arc*, 1431, Micle)

Vu que:

- (20) *Mais veu que ceste ordonnance parle generalement, ie croy que ses exceptions...* ‘But since this law is general, I believe that its exceptions...’ (direct speech) (Terrien, *Commentaire du droit civil tant public que privé observé en Normandie*, 1578, ConDÉ)
- (21) *Cet Article est entièrement inutile, vû qu’il suffisoit de l’Article 250 pour la question ...* ‘This article is entirely useless, because Article 250 is sufficient for this question’ (Basnage, *La coutume réformée du païs et duché de Normandie*, 1678, ConDÉ)
- (22) *disant qu’il s’estoit deument deschargé veu qu’il juroit qu’il ne devoit riens au dit demandeur, ...* ‘claiming that he had sorted out everything as he should because he swore that he had no debts towards the aforementioned claimer’ (Echiquier, *Style et Usage*, 1425, Micle)
- (23) ... *veu que nous sommes sur notre partement d’avecques vous ...* ‘because we are on the point of separating from you’ (direct speech) (*Roche-Guyon*, 1502, Micle)

It appears from the corpus investigations of old administrative texts that the preposition *vu* is more frequent than the conjunction *vu que* until around 1550. Later, the conjunction is used more frequently

than the preposition. Examples are found both in comments and in fictitious, pedagogical direct speech.

5.3. Contemporary literary corpus

All texts in our literary corpus of Contemporary French stem from Frantext. The corpus consists of 19 texts published in 2020 or later, of which the two most recent are from 2022.

Table 4. Frequency of prepositional phrase *vu* + complement and of clausal conjunctions introduced by *vu que*. Actual numbers in brackets. Contemporary literary texts.

	<i>Vu</i> (preposition)	<i>Vu que</i> (conjunction)
Literary texts from Frantext 2020-2022		
Corpus size: 1,184,670 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	1	2.5
	(12)	(30)

Vu:

Examples of the preposition *vu* found in literary corpus of Frantext never shows concord. It is found in direct and in indirect speech in standard (24) and in colloquial French (25). Thus, in example (24), we find the use of the relative *dont*, the subjunctive *fasse*, which illustrate a normative language use, whereas in example (25), we find the absence of the negative particle *ne* (*je vais pas*), typical of oral style.

- (24) *D'ailleurs, vu la manière dont je m'en occupe ces temps-ci, il vaudrait mieux que je fasse ça dès aujourd'hui même si je ne partais pas.* 'Besides, **given** the way I'm dealing with it these days, it would be better if I did it today even if I didn't leave.' (Sabot, *Nous sommes les chardons*, 2020, Frantext)
- (25) *Mais ils disent aussi que vu le prix du billet d'avion, je vais pas aller en Colombie tous les jours alors que pendant ce voyage, c'est l'occasion ou jamais.* 'But they also say that **given** the price of the plane ticket, I'm not going to go to Colombia every day while during this trip, it's now or never' (direct speech) (Borie, *Dulce de leche*, 2021, Frantext)

Vu que:

Some of the examples quoted below are even clearer examples of colloquial use: in example (27), we find the elision of *ça*, as well as the absence of the negative particle *ne* (*Ç'a pas été*); in example (28), we find a typical colloquial dislocation of a prepositional phrase (*de la calorie*) represented by *en* before the verb. On the other hand, example (26) is more standard:

- (26) *Vu que je leur avait dit qu'il était mort, ça m'échauffait un peu leur façon de ne pas me croire ...* 'Since I had told them that he was dead, I was a little irritated by their way of not believing me' (Sabot, *Nous sommes les chardons*, 2020, Frantext)
- (27) *Ç'a pas été long à trouver vu que j'ai pris seulement une petite valise en déménageant.* 'It didn't take long to find **since** I only took a small suitcase when moving.' (Luzak, *Poudre blanche, sable d'or*, 2021, Frantext)

- (28) *Et ça tombait bien vu que cet été-là j'en brûlais, de la calorie !* ‘And that was good **since** that summer I was burning calories!’ (Laurens, *Là où la caravane passe*, 2021, Frantext)

We conclude that *vu que* continues to be used more frequently in the literary register than *vu*, and that both can be used in standard and colloquial styles.

5.4. Contemporary administrative corpus

Examples of the preposition *vu* found in the administrative corpus never show concord. In order to examine the use of *vu* + NP in contemporary French in a diaphasic dimension, and to test whether the preposition *vu* is still mostly found in legal and administrative texts, we have conducted a corpus query on the corpus query system Sketch Engine (<https://www.sketchengine.eu>), which provides texts corpora of both uncategorised and more specific text types.

Table 5. Frequency of prepositional phrase *vu* + complement and of clausal conjunctions introduced by *vu que*. Actual numbers in brackets. Contemporary administrative texts.

	<i>Vu</i> (preposition)	<i>Vu que</i> (conjunction)
EUR-Lex judgments French 12/2016		
Corpus size: 51,748,397 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	18.8 (9,713)	0.1 (71)
non-filtered corpus French Web 2017 (frTenTen17)		
Corpus size: 6,004,939,099 words		
frequency pr. 100,000 words	10.9 (653,925)	1.1 (67,948)

The French corpus has a sub-corpus of legal texts (EUR-Lex judgments French 12/2016)¹⁶, which contains 51,748,397 words. This provided 9,713 occurrences, corresponding to 18.8 per 100,000 words.¹⁷ The most frequent complements are *procédure* (4,263 occurrences), *rapport* (3,142 occurrences), and *décision* (1,796 occurrences):

- (29) *M. B. Fülöp, administrateur, vu la procédure écrite et à la suite de l'audience du 25 juin 2009, vu la décision prise, l'avocat général entendu, de juger l'affaire sans conclusions, rend le présent Arrêt I ...* ‘M.B. Fülöp, Administrator, having regard to the written procedure and further to the hearing on 25 June 2009, **given** the decision taken, after hearing the Advocate General, to proceed to judgment without an Opinion, gives the following Judgment 1’ (*Judgment of the Court (Fourth Chamber) of 15 October 2009*, Sketch engine)

In comparison, the same query launched in the non-filtered corpus French Web 2017 (frTenTen17), which contains 6,004,939,099 words,¹⁸ provided 653,925 occurrences corresponding to 10.9 hits per

¹⁶ “The Eur-Lex judgments corpus is a multilingual corpus in all the official languages of the European Union focused only on judgments of the Court of Justice” (<https://www.sketchengine.eu/eurlex-judgments-corpus/>).

¹⁷ We used the following search strand: [tag!="V.*" & word!="au" & word!="Au"] [word="vu" | word="Vu"]. The result is not entirely free of noise; this would require a manual examination of the more than 9,700 hits, but by using the same search strand for both corpora to be compared, the proportions are sufficiently reliable to indicate a possible difference.

¹⁸ “The French Web Corpus (frTenTen) is a French corpus made up of texts collected from the Internet. [...] The corpus contains many varieties of the French language – European, Canadian and African French”

100,000 words. This indicates that in contemporary French, *vu* is still most frequent in formal and administrative text types.

In order to examine the use of *vu que* in contemporary French in a diaphasic dimension, and to test whether the conjunction *vu que* is still mainly found in legal and administrative texts, we have conducted a corpus query on Sketch Engine (<https://www.sketchengine.eu>) on the sub-corpus of legal texts (EUR-Lex judgments French 12/2016), which contains 51,748,397 words. This provided 71 occurrences, corresponding to 0.1 per 100,000 words:

- (30) *En effet, il paraît raisonnable de considérer qu'une personne impliquée dans une violation du droit de la concurrence, face à l'éventualité d'une telle communication, serait dissuadée d'utiliser la possibilité offerte par de tels programmes de clémence, notamment **vu que** les informations volontairement fournies par cette personne peuvent faire l'objet d'échanges entre la Commission et les autorités nationales de concurrence en vertu des articles 11 et 12 du règlement n° 1/2003.* 'Indeed, it seems reasonable to consider that a person involved in a violation of competition rules, faced with the possibility of such a communication, would be dissuaded from using the possibility offered by such leniency programs, in particular **in view of the fact** that the information voluntarily provided by this person may be the subject of exchanges between the Commission and the national competition authorities under Articles 11 and 12 of Regulation No 1/2003' (Judgment of the Court (grand Chamber) of 14 June 2011, Sketchengine)

In comparison, the same query launched in the non-filtered corpus French Web 2017 (frTenTen17), which contains 6,004,939,099 words, provided 67,948 occurrences,¹⁹ corresponding to 1.1 hits per 100,000 words. A large part of the identified occurrences from the corpus are from blogs and websites which approach the consumers in an informal and familiar way: the relatively high frequency of *vu que* in this corpus indicates that the use of *vu que* in contemporary French, in contrast to the preposition *vu*, is no longer primarily related to formal and administrative text types:

- (31) ***Vu que** je n'ai pas de téléphone pour tester, il faut pour le moment cliquer sur les bords (une bande de quelques pixels) ... 'Since I don't have a phone to do a test, it is now necessary to click on the edges (a strip of a few pixels)'* (<http://blog.zoubda.fr/>)

Example (32), which is found in Frantext, is an example of informal and colloquial style, confirming the observed tendency of spreading to informal text types. Here, the verb of the causal clause is omitted, *ça* is used rather than *cela*, and the *ne* is omitted in the negation, all signs of colloquial language:

- (32) *J'ai que ça en tête. Tout le temps. Ces pensées, que je garde pour moi. **Vu que** les faiblesses, ça passe pas. Je m'imagine mal ouvrir les vannes dans le vestiaire ... 'I have only that in mind. All the time. These thoughts, which I keep to myself. **Given** that the weaknesses, that doesn't stop. I can't imagine myself opening the valves in the cloakroom'* (Théobald, *Boys*, 2019, Frantext)

(<https://www.sketchengine.eu/frtnten-french-corpus/>).

¹⁹ In order to avoid noise such as occurrences of matrix + complement (*J'ai vu que ...*), we used the following search strand, which eliminates examples with a verb placed either in the first or the second position before the participle: [tag!="V.*"] [word="vu"] | [word="Vu"] | [word="que"].

Thus, the actualization process of the conjunction appears to be more advanced than the actualization of the preposition.²⁰

Empirical results from Bolly & Degand (2012) indeed support these observations. Their corpus is divided into two genres: formal (essays and treaties) and informal (accounts and novels). Their results show that a high frequency of *vu que* in the pre-classical period, in particular in the formal genres, drops radically in the classical period, and further in the premodern and modern/contemporary periods. In the informal genres there is also a radical drop from the pre-classical to the classical period, but in contrast to the formal genres, the frequency in the informal genres increases after the classical period. Thus, whereas the use of *vu que* in the pre-classical and classical periods was more frequent in the formal genres, the proportions seem to switch during the following centuries; and in modern/contemporary French, the use is more significant in the narrative texts. Studies of recent spoken language support the tendency of spread to informal contexts, since *vu que* seems to be even more frequent here. So, they suggest that an external factor could have caused the emergence of this construction since it seems to spread from formal to informal contexts (cf. Andersen 2001a, 2001b).

In a following study, Bolly & Degand (2013) take it a step further and propose to analyse *vu que* (as well as *on a/nous avons vu que*) as discourse markers in present-day French, based on the arguments that they “share a discourse structuring function” and that discourse markers, in their view, “do encode semantic meaning [...] and they can be analysed syntactically”. As regards *vu que*, the grammatical content is *causal* (corresponding to what in our approach is labelled semantic frame), and its syntactic function is a subordinating conjunction, whereas the authors affirm that *on a vu que* encodes *metadiscursive meaning* and functions as a *propositional marker* (Bolly & Degand 2013: 212-213). These criteria (metadiscursive meaning and propositional marker) are not included in our definition of discourse markers, as listed in Kragh (2022), and accordingly neither *vu que* nor *on a vu que* are investigated as discourse markers.²¹ Regardless of our differences with respect to categorization, Bolly & Degand (2013) arrive at the same conclusion as we have presented in this section, i.e. that *vu que* is already fully grammaticalized in pre-classical French, that it has its origin in formal contexts, and that its tendency to generalise to less-formal contexts over time is a clear illustration of an externally motivated language change as defined by Andersen (2008: 36).

5.5. Discussion of the status of fictitious direct speech in older texts

The axis of diamesic variation was proposed by Koch & Oesterreicher (1990), Oesterreicher & Koch (2016), opposing the spoken vs. written conception, which should not be confused with the medium of communication: speech *versus* writing. Instead, it is anchored in the difference between the communication of proximity vs. the communication of distance, which has been illustrated by the authors in terms of the opposition between e.g. dialogue vs. monologue, familiarity of the partners vs. distance between the partners, face-to-face-interaction vs. spatiotemporal separation, free thematic development vs. fixation of topics, non-public vs. public, spontaneity vs. reflection, context embeddedness vs. ‘detachment’, expressivity vs. contextual dissociation, affective speech vs.

²⁰ As regards the position of the *vu que* clause, our examples indicate a preference for placing the causal clause in non-initial position. A possible explanation of the postposition is that this position may be a trace of the original absolute construction, which tended to follow the main clause. However, both ante- and postpositions are represented in the most recent examples, which could suggest that this trace is weakening (for a thorough discussion on the position, see Kragh 2022: 270 ff.)

²¹ We do agree with Bolly & Degand (2013: 224) that *on a/nous avons vu que* can be considered as a frame maker at the level of metadiscourse, thus fulfilling the “double function of referring back to already mentioned facts and presenting those facts as self-evident”. However, being metadiscursive is not the same as being a marker. Our classifications of DMs are not entirely identical since we do not include as markers entities which have fully maintained their lexical content. In our view, *Nous avons vu que* has lexical content corresponding to *Comme vous avez correctement dit, ...* ‘As you correctly said, ...’.

objectivity.

When studying old texts, we are aware, as already stated, that fictitious direct speech cannot be conceived as mirroring genuine orality. However, as shown in a number of studies of French literary texts opposing passages of fictitious speech and of narrative parts in one and the same text or in different texts, in order to investigate diachronic differences between the two, speech invariably displays an advanced language use compared to narration, in the case of changes “from below” (see, e.g., Schøsler (1973), Glessgen & Schøsler (2018), and more recently, Glikman (2022: chapter 4)). Given that fictitious speech in literary texts is innovative compared to narrative texts, in the case of changes from below, which is the status of fictitious speech in administrative texts? We have seen in section 5.2 that old administrative texts are different with respect to the communication axis of distance-proximity since some, for example *the Coutumier of ConDÉ*, are close to the distance pole and their learned style full of abstractions and generalisations, whereas, according to Mathieu Goux, *Les Styles et Instructions* and *Les procès/minutes* are closer to the proximity pole of communication than the other texts. Above, we claimed that the didactic use of dialogue, known as a pedagogical tool, already in Ancient Rome and during the Middle Ages, does not mirror genuine oral communication amongst “ordinary people” and that the training of future lawyers in oral communication to the public is intended to provide the speaker with authority, thus a situation of communication typical of a language of distance, implying the following characteristic features: distance between the partners, fixation of topics, public communication, reflection instead of spontaneity, ‘detachment’, contextual dissociation, and objectivity. This implies that the presence of *vu/vu que* in old administrative texts, whether in fictitious direct speech or not, does not imply an innovative use of language “from below”, as we find it in direct speech in literary texts. Consequently, the frequency of *vu/vu que* in old administrative texts should rather be seen as an indication that these forms are introduced “from above”, i.e. the administrative use, and not “from below”, i.e. from “ordinary” oral language.

6. Conclusion

The present paper has examined two rather unexplored cases of grammaticalization and subsequent actualizations of the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* in French, with the aim of clarifying whether they are introduced “from above” or “from below”. Most frequently, innovations start from below, i.e., in unmarked contexts. Analyses in Kragh (2022) show that, in Modern French, the two forms are mainly found in administrative texts. This could be an indication that the forms have spread from below – i.e. emerged in unmarked text types and later spread to marked text types, where it became dominant – but the opposite direction of actualization is possible, indeed plausible. We also wanted to investigate whether the introduction of the two forms is linked or independent. Let us sum up our results:

Analyses of our old literary corpus indicate that the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* emerge at the same time (first attested in *Jouvencel* 1461) and with almost equal frequency: 3.3 and 4.1 occurrences per 100,000 words, respectively. During the following century, they both increase in frequency, but the use of *vu que* exceeds that of *vu* (section 5.1). In our old administrative corpus, the preposition *vu* is more frequent than the conjunction *vu que* until around 1550. Later, the conjunction is used more frequently than the preposition. The average of the period is 1.3 (*vu*) and 3.5 (*vu que*) per 100,000 words. We have put forward arguments in favour of our conviction that the presence of the two forms in administrative direct speech cannot be interpreted as a feature of communication of proximity, implying that it is not a sign of communication “from below” (section 5.2). In the contemporary literary texts examined here, *vu que* continues to be used more frequently than *vu*, and both can be used in standard and colloquial styles (section 5.3), whereas in our contemporary administrative corpus, we find the opposite: the use of the preposition *vu* is almost 10 times as frequent as the use of *vu que* (section 5.4). Thus, our analyses of the data from our different corpora

suggest that the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* seem to appear first in administrative texts where *vu* is more frequent than *vu que*; later, in literary texts, they seem to be equally frequent. In contemporary French, *vu* and *vu que* have spread to colloquial style in literary texts, *vu que* being more frequent than *vu*. In contemporary administrative texts, *vu* is much more frequent; in other words, the two forms have spread “from above”. Although both have spread to colloquial style, the restricted use of *vu* compared to that of *vu que* suggests, in our opinion, that *vu* has specialized to marked (administrative) contexts, whereas *vu que* is clearly in the process of spreading to unmarked contexts.

Let us finally consider the relation between the two forms, the question being whether they are independent or linked evolutions. The chronology of our findings in the old corpora (section 5) are hardly conclusive on this point; however, it seems that the preposition *vu* is more frequent than the conjunction *vu que* until around 1550, suggesting that the grammaticalization of *vu* is anterior to that of *vu que*. As pointed out in section 3, it is logical to assume that once grammaticalized as a preposition, *vu*'s potential for nominal complements is expanded to also include a complement clause. Subsequently, *vu* + complement clause introduced by *que* has been reanalysed as the conjunction *vu que* introducing a causal clause. Since the preposition + complement is already part of grammar, this last process is a secondary grammaticalization, i.e. a regrammation $B > C$.

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